

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1607
ANSWERED ON:01.08.2001
INDO-PAK TIES
PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government have initiated certain measures to strengthen people-to-people ties between India and Pakistan;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the response of Pakistani Government thereto; and
- (c) the number of cross-border marriages solemnised during each of the last three years?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH)

(a)&(b) Government are of the view that strengthening people-to-people ties between India and Pakistan will contribute to the establishment of a relationship of peace, friendship and cooperation between the two countries. In keeping with this approach, and to create a conducive environment prior to the visit of President Pervez Musharraf to India (14-16 July 2001), Government recently announced some significant initiatives to promote people-to-people contacts.

On 4th July 2001, Government announced that 20 scholarship will be offered to students from Pakistan in Indian technical institutes; Pakistani poets, academics, writers and artistes would be invited individually and in groups for a month long visit to India as guests of Government; groups of Pakistani students (from school and university, boys and girls) will be invited by Government to visit and tour Indian academic establishments.

On 9th July 2001, to make travel as simple and easy as possible, Government announced that henceforth Pakistani passport holders will be allowed to come by the road route and obtain visas at the check post at Attari. An additional check post will be opened at Munabao in Rajasthan. Similar check posts will also be opened at designated points along the IB and the LoC in Jammu & Kashmir.

Pakistan continues to adhere to its traditionally narrow and unifocal approach to bilateral relations which is fixated on the issue of Jammu & Kashmir.

(c) Government do not have information of this nature.